



John Wesley High School to close its doors; students and teachers must be transferred



Beauty & the Beach

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Wave of anti-transgender bills in GOP-led states divides U.S. faith leaders

By DAVID CRARY
AP National Writer

As Republican-governed states across the nation advance myriad bills targeting transgender young people, America's faith leaders are starkly divided in their assessment. Some view the legislation as reflecting God's will; others voice outrage that Christianity is being invoked to justify laws they view as cruel and hateful.

In one camp are many legislators who have cited their conservative religious beliefs while promoting these bills, as well as leaders of America's two largest denominations — the Catholic Church and the Southern Baptist Convention.

U.S. Catholic bishops have rejected the concept of gender transition; they issued guidelines in March to stop Catholic hospitals from assisting in such transitions.



In this photo provided by Dirk Bolle, the Rev. Pat Langlois, senior pastor of MCC Church of Christ of the Valley, speaks at an interfaith rally in Pasadena, Calif., on March 31, 2023, protesting the wave of anti-transgender bills being enacted in numerous Republican-governed states.

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Associated Press

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6:30pm - 8:30pm

WEDNESDAY
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SINGER
6:30pm - 8:30pm

THURSDAY
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SINGER
6:30pm - 8:30pm

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Wave of anti-transgender bills in GOP-led states divides U.S. faith leaders



In this Feb. 6, 2019, file photo, state Sen. David Bullard poses for a portrait in his office in Oklahoma City.

Associated Press

Continued from Front

The SBC has been on record since 2014 asserting that gender transition is “contrary to God’s design.” In an online article, the Rev. Albert Mohler, president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, depicted gender transition as “a blatant attempt to undermine the very order of creation.” “The Bible reveals that any attempt to subvert creation ends in disaster, not in human liberation,” he wrote. Faith leaders who support transgender rights bristle at the use of religious rhetoric to marginalize trans people. “As a Christian leader, it’s horrifying to me that Christianity and the Bible are being used by the religious right to bludgeon people through these many bills,” said Serene Jones, the president of Union Theological Seminary in New York City. “To use religious language like that is an abomination,” she said. “They are threatening the lives and well-being of so many people around the U.S. and the world.” Jones said it was wrong to

cite the Bible in rejecting transgender identity.

“It wasn’t something that the Bible even thought about,” she said. “The larger message there is a message of love and inclusion.” By the latest count, at least 20 states have imposed bans or limits on transgender athletes’ sports participation at the K-12 or collegiate level. And at least 18 states have adopted laws or policies — including some blocked by courts — barring gender-affirming medical care, such as puberty blockers, hormone therapy and surgery for minors. In Oklahoma, state Sen. David Bullard cited a biblical passage in introducing what he calls the Millstone Act — a bill that would make it a felony for doctors to provide gender transition procedures to anyone under the age of 26. Bullard, who has served as a deacon at his Baptist church, said the act’s name alludes to a passage in the Book of Matthew suggesting that anyone causing a child to sin should be drowned in the sea with a millstone hung around their neck.

In the Texas legislature, one of the leading backers of anti-trans legislation is an ordained minister — Rep. Steve Toth. One bill he introduced also proposes making it a felony to provide gender-affirming care for minors.

Bills in other states have sought to restrict transgender people’s use of public restrooms and limit their ability to be called by the pronouns that reflect their gender identity.

In recent months, several of the Southern Baptists’ state affiliates have adopted resolutions embracing the overall thrust of the anti-trans bills.

A resolution approved by the Tennessee Baptist Convention depicted gender dysphoria as a “sexual perversion.”

The South Carolina Baptist Convention urged its followers “to resist speaking falsely and giving credence to the philosophies of the LGBTQ+ movement by adopting preferred pronouns that do not refer to a person’s created sex and biological makeup.” And the Southern Baptists of Texas cited a verse from Gen-

esis in rejecting “any type of false doctrine or deceptive application related to gender identity and sexuality.” In various communities across the U.S. — including Knoxville, Tennessee, and Madison, Wisconsin — interfaith groups of moderate and liberal religious leaders have held events to show support for transgender people and denounce the wave of anti-trans legislation. In Pasadena, California, one such event took place on March 31, bringing together Christian, Jewish and Muslim leaders for a news conference at All Saints Church, home to an Episcopal congregation that embraces LGBTQ inclusion.

Even though California’s Democratic-controlled legislature would not approve any anti-trans measures, an organizer of the event said it was important to speak out in support of trans people in states enacting such bills.

“If our voices can be heard by some trans kid in Kentucky, realizing there are faith leaders who’ve got their back, they might hang on a little bit longer,” said

the Rev. Pat Langlois, senior pastor of Metropolitan Community Church United Church of Christ in the Valley.

“These bills are the most vitriolic and cruel legislation I’ve seen,” she said. “I have a non-binary teenager, so I take this really personally, not just as a person of faith and as a lesbian, but as a mom.”

Langlois, whose LGBTQ activism spans several decades, described the current situation as “probably the scariest time” because of the array of hostile bills.

Her worries were compounded on May 4, when the rector of All Saints, Mike Kinman, told his congregation that the church had received two threats — that a bomb would be detonated during Sunday worship, and that someone would come to a service with a gun to kill the pastor.

The leader of one of the largest mainline Protestant denominations, the Rev. Elizabeth Eaton of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, has condemned the anti-trans bills as an attack on trans people’s humanity.

“While members of our church hold various convictions regarding gender, the teaching of our church supports legislation and policies to protect every person’s human dignity and civil rights,” Eaton said in a recent statement. “Our church teaches that we affirm transgender and nonbinary siblings as God’s children.”

As for U.S. Catholics, there are diverse views among church personnel.

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has told Catholic hospitals they must not perform “interventions, whether surgical or chemical, that aim to transform the sexual characteristics of a human body into those of the opposite sex.” Christine Zuba, a transgender woman who lives in New Jersey, was disappointed that transgender people weren’t even mentioned in the USCCB’s 14-page document, except in a footnote. □

U.S. Postal Service taking new steps to prevent carrier robberies, stolen mail

By DAVID SHARP

Associated Press

PORTLAND, Maine (AP) —

The U.S. Postal Service is replacing tens of thousands of antiquated keys used by postal carriers and installing thousands of high-security collection boxes to stop a surge in robberies and mail thefts, officials said Friday.

The Postal Service is replacing 49,000 so-called arrow locks with electronic versions to make them less attractive to criminals who have been targeting them to steal mail from secure receptacles, and it is placing 12,000 hardened blue collection boxes in high-risk areas, according to the Postal Service and Postal Inspection Service.

The announcement came days after the National Association of Letter Carriers expressed outrage as The Associated Press reported that nearly 500 postal carriers were robbed last year. "We're doubling down on our efforts to protect our postal employees and the security of the mail. We are hardening targets both physical and digital to make them less desirable



A letter carrier is bundled up in winter clothing while making afternoon deliveries during a cold weather snap, Friday, Feb. 3, 2023, in Portsmouth, N.H.

Associated Press

to thieves and working with our law enforcement partners to bring perpetrators to justice," Postal Inspection Service Chief Gary Barksdale said Friday in a statement. The spike in postal carrier robberies has put letter carriers on edge. The robberies have more than quadrupled over a

decade, and weapons were used in most of the 496 robberies last year, according to data provided by the Postal Inspection Service to the AP under the Freedom of Information Act. Thirty-one postal carriers were injured, and one of them was killed last year, according to the data.

On Thursday, federal officials announced two more people were charged on allegations of pulling a letter carrier off a home's front steps while stealing an arrow key and using a knife to rob another carrier last year in Massachusetts. The Postal Service declined to say how many arrow

keys are in use with the nation's nearly 250,000 letter carriers.

But efforts by criminals to intercept the mail go beyond robberies to steal those keys. The Postal Service said also there were 38,500 thefts of mail from blue collection boxes in the 2022 fiscal year.

Criminals are targeting the mail, often in an organized fashion, to commit financial crimes, including altering checks to commit check fraud, officials said, but there are steep federal penalties for doing so.

Postmaster General Louis DeJoy said the carriers who deliver 162.1 million pieces of first-class mail each day should be able to work "in safety and to be free from targeting by criminals seeking to access the public's mail." Mail theft carries a penalty of up to five years in prison. Possession, concealment or disposal of property carries a sentence of as many as 10 years in prison. Assault carries a sentence of up to 10 years for a first offense, and up to 25 years for any subsequent offense, officials said. □

No. 2 US diplomat Wendy Sherman to retire after decades in government service

By MATTHEW LEE

AP Diplomatic Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) —

The Biden administration's number two diplomat is retiring after decades of U.S. government service.

Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman will step down from the post this summer, having been involved in some of the most consequential, and controversial, foreign policy decisions during Democratic administrations since Bill Clinton was president.

Sherman, 73, said in an internal note to State Department staff that her retirement would be effective at the end of June.

"The arc of history will only bend toward justice if peo-

ple of conscience steer it in the right direction," she said.

"That it is our job to have courage, to collaborate

with others and seek out common ground, to persist against the odds, to use our voice and our power for good to keep faith with the

promise of our democracy and to never, ever lose hope."

"Diplomacy is not for the faint of heart," she added. Secretary of State Antony Blinken lauded Sherman's career, saying that President Joe Biden chose her for the number two post at the State Department because he believed she could revitalize America's relationships around the world.

"President Biden asked Wendy to serve in this role because he knew he could count on her to help revitalize America's alliances and partnerships and manage our complex relationships with competitors," Blinken said in a statement.

Sherman has been a key part of the Biden administration's efforts to compete with China in the Indo-Pacific and was particularly active in engagement with Pacific island states while also meeting with senior Chinese officials on numerous occasions.

She also had a significant role in marshaling international diplomatic support for Ukraine after Russia's invasion.

As counselor to former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, Sherman was a lead negotiator in the Clinton administration's ultimately unsuccessful talks to end North Korea's ballistic missile program in the late 1990s. □



Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman speaks on the situation in Afghanistan at the State Department in Washington, Wednesday, Aug. 18, 2021.

Associated Press

Early heat wave in Pacific Northwest could break records

By CLAIRE RUSH

Associated Press/Report for America

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — An early May heat wave this weekend could surpass daily records in parts of the Pacific Northwest and worsen wildfires already burning in western Canada, a historically temperate region that has grappled with scorching summer temperatures and unprecedented wildfires fueled by climate change in recent years.

"We're looking at record-breaking temperatures," said Miles Higa, meteorologist at the National Weather Service's Portland office, describing the warmth as "unusual for this time of year."

The unseasonal high temperatures could further fuel the dozens of fires burning in Canada's western Alberta province, where officials have ordered evacuations and declared a state of emergency. Residents and officials in the Northwest have been trying to adjust to the likely reality of longer, hotter heat waves following the deadly "heat dome" weather phenomenon in



In this photo provided by the Government of Alberta Fire Service, a burned section of forest in the area near Edson, Alberta, smolders, Saturday, May 6, 2023.

2021 that prompted record temperatures and deaths across the region.

The National Weather Service issued a heat advisory Friday lasting from Saturday through Monday for much of the western parts of both Oregon and Washington state. It said the temperatures could raise the risk of heat-related illness, particularly for those who are dehydrated or don't have effective cooling.

Temperatures in Portland, Oregon, are expected to hover around 94 F (34.4 C) throughout the weekend, according to the website of the National Weather Service office there. The current daily temperature records for May 13 and 14 stand at 92 F (33.3 C) and 91 F (32.8 C), dating from 1973 and 2014, respectively. Temperatures in the Seattle area could also meet or surpass daily records, ac-

According to National Weather Service meteorologist Jacob DeFlitch. The mercury could near 85 F (29.4 C) on Saturday and reach into the low 90s (32.2 C) on Sunday, he said.

King County, home to Seattle, directed transportation operators such as bus drivers to let people ride for free if they're seeking respite from the heat or heading to a cooling center. The city's regional homeless

authority said several cooling and day centers will be open across the county.

Authorities also urged people to be wary of cold water temperatures, should they be tempted to take a river or lake swim to cool off.

"Rivers are still running cold. We have snow melting and temperatures ... probably in the low- to mid-40s (4.4 to 7.2 C) right now," National Weather Service meteorologist Higa said. "You're nice and warm and jump into the cold water — that could pose a risk to getting cold water shock."

Residents and officials in the Pacific Northwest have become more vigilant about heat wave preparations after some 800 people died in Oregon, Washington and British Columbia during the heat dome weather event in late June and early July 2021.

The temperature at the time soared to an all-time high of 116 F (46.7 C) in Portland and smashed heat records in cities and towns across the region. Many of those who died were older people who lived alone. □

Associated Press

Honduran teen dies in U.S. immigration custody

By NOMAAN MERCHANT

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A 17-year-old boy from Honduras died this week in U.S. immigration custody, American and Honduran officials said Friday, underscoring concerns about a strained immigration system as the Biden administration manages the end of asylum restrictions known as Title 42.

The teenager was identified as Ángel Eduardo Maradiaga Espinoza, according to a tweet from Honduran foreign relations minister Enrique Reina. Maradiaga was detained at a facility in Safety Harbor, Florida, Reina said.

He entered the U.S. several weeks ago and died

Wednesday, according to a U.S. official familiar with the matter who was not authorized to speak publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

No cause of death was immediately available nor were circumstances of any illness or medical treatment. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, which is responsible for the facility where Maradiaga was held, said in a statement that a review of health care records was underway as was an investigation by a medical examiner.

HHS "is deeply saddened by this tragic loss and our heart goes out to the family, with whom we are in touch," the department's

statement said.

White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre called the news "devastating" and referred questions about the investigation to HHS.

The asylum restrictions under Title 42 expired Thursday with President Joe Biden's administration announcing new curbs on border crossers that went into effect Friday. Tens of thousands of people tried to cross the U.S.-Mexico border in the weeks before the expiration of Title 42, under which U.S. officials expelled many people but allowed exemptions for others, including minors crossing the border unaccompanied by a parent.

This was the first known



The seal for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is displayed in Media, Pa., Sept. 15, 2017.

Associated Press

death of an immigrant child in custody during the Biden administration. At least six immigrant children died in U.S. custody during the administration of former President Donald Trump. HHS operates long-term facilities to hold children who cross the border with-

out a parent until they can be placed with a sponsor. HHS facilities generally have beds and facilities as well as schooling and other activities for minors, unlike Border Patrol stations and detention sites in which detainees sometimes sleep on the floor in cells. □

South Africa summons US ambassador over weapons for Russia allegations

By **GERALD IMRAY**
Associated Press

CAPE TOWN, South Africa (AP) — South Africa's foreign ministry summoned the U.S. ambassador to a meeting Friday over allegations he made a day earlier that the country had provided Russia with arms and ammunition for its war in Ukraine.

Amid the diplomatic fallout over the allegations, South African Foreign Minister Naledi Pandor also planned to speak with U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, the ministry's spokesperson said on Twitter.

The committee that regulates arms exports in South Africa "has no record of an approved arms sale by the state to Russia related to the period/incident in question," spokesperson Clayson Monyela tweeted. "If any crimes were committed, the law will take its course."

U.S. Ambassador to South Africa Reuben Brigety alleged during a news conference Thursday that weapons and ammunition were secretly loaded



U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Reuben Brigety, speaks to journalists in Nairobi, Kenya, on March 30, 2010.

onto a Russian cargo ship at the Simon's Town naval base in December and then transported to Russia, Brigety said. "We (the U.S.) are confident that weapons were loaded into that vessel, and I would bet my life on the accuracy of that assertion," Brigety said. He

called South Africa's "arming" of Russia "fundamentally unacceptable." South African President Cyril Ramaphosa confirmed an investigation was underway into the December visit by the Russian cargo ship Lady R. Before Brigety went public, U.S. and South Afri-

can officials had agreed behind the scenes that the investigation should be allowed to play out and would incorporate any evidence U.S. intelligence officials shared, Ramaphosa said. South Africa could be in breach of international law, if it provided arms to

Russia. The president's office said in a statement there was "no evidence" currently that weapons or ammunition were loaded onto the ship at the Simon's Town base or anywhere in South Africa.

The Associated Press has independently verified that the Lady R was at the South African naval base from Dec. 6-8, as Brigety claimed. A review of records by the AP has also shown that the Lady R is tied to a company that was sanctioned by the U.S. for transporting weapons for the Russian government and aiding its war effort.

German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock said the situation would likely get discussed at a meeting of European Union foreign ministers in Stockholm on Friday.

Baerbock noted they were dealing with only allegations so far, but said weapons exports to Russia "would be an extension of a war of aggression in violation of international law, and so we take all reports very, very seriously." □

Associated Press

London police chief rejects complaints of coronation protesters

By **DANICA KIRKA**
Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — London's top police officer defended the department Friday from complaints of a heavy-handed response

to protesters during the coronation of King Charles III, saying his officers intervened to prevent "serious disruption and criminality." Metropolitan Police Commissioner Mark Rowley

said officers responded to "rapidly developing intelligence" suggesting protests could affect the safety and security of the coronation events last Saturday. Prompting the concerns were indications that demonstrators planned to use high-volume sound devices that could have panicked horses and to block the procession between Buckingham Palace and Westminster Abbey by locking onto things along the route, Rowley said in a letter responding to questions from Mayor Sadiq Khan.

"Had our officers not acted on the reasonable grounds based on the evidence in front of them in the moment and the potential risk to the event, there would now be much more serious questions to answer about

the event," Rowley wrote. "Serious and reliable intelligence told us that the risks were very real." Rowley's assessment came after it emerged that a supporter of the monarchy who was waiting along the parade route in hopes of seeing the new king was arrested and detained for 13 hours simply because she was standing close to protesters in central London on Saturday. Alice Chambers has called on the police department to put new processes in place to prevent a repeat of the incident.

Anti-monarchy groups, environmental campaigners and civil liberties organizations have accused the police, and Britain's Conservative government, of stifling the right to protest

by using recently enacted police powers to clamp down on peaceful but disruptive demonstrations on coronation day.

Republic, a group that is campaigning to replace the king with an elected head of state, has pledged to take legal action.

The U.K.'s recently passed Public Order Act, introduced in response to recent environmental protests that disrupted transportation around the country, allows police to search demonstrators for items such as locks and glue. It allows penalties of up to 12 months in prison for protesters who block roads or interfere with "national infrastructure."

The new rules came into effect three days before the coronation. □



Protesters from climate protest group 'Just Stop Oil' are apprehended by police officers in the crowd close to where Britain's King Charles III will be crowned at Westminster Abbey, in London, Saturday, May 6, 2023.

Associated Press

Pope joins Meloni in urging Italians to have more kids, not pets

By **NICOLE WINFIELD** and **PAOLO SANTALUCIA**
Associated Press

ROME (AP) — Pope Francis joined Italy's conservative premier on Friday in encouraging Italians to have more children, denouncing the financial precariousness facing young couples and "selfish, egotistical" choices that have led to a record low birth rate that is threatening the country's economic future.

Francis urged concrete political action to invert the "demographic winter," which in population terms resulted in the disappearance of a city the size of Bari last year.

Blasting couples who have pets instead of children, Francis called for resources to be dedicated to helping couples grow their families, saying it was necessary to "plant the future" with hope. "Let us not resign ourselves to sterile dullness and pessimism," Francis told an annual gathering of pro-family organizations. "Let us not believe that history is already marked, that nothing can be done to reverse the trend." Italy recorded a record low number of live births last year,



Pope Francis delivers his speech flanked by Italian Premier Giorgia Meloni during a conference on birthrate, at Auditorium della Conciliazione, in Rome, Friday, May 12, 2023.

Associated Press

392,598, which combined with an elevated number of deaths, 713,499, has accelerated the demographic trend that threatens to crash the country's social security system.

The government of Premier Giorgia Meloni is backing a campaign to encourage at least 500,000 births annually by 2033, a date that demographers say is necessary to prevent the economy from

collapsing by growing the wage-earning population as retirees draw on their pensions. Meloni came to power last year on a pro-family campaign of "God, family, fatherland" and her government has proposed a host of measures to try to encourage families to have more children, including tax cuts to increase spending power, given Italy's fertility rate of 1.24 children per woman is among the low-

est in the world. Numerous studies have pointed to a combination of factors that discourage women from having children, including a lack of affordable child care spots, low salaries and precarious work contracts, and a tradition of women often bearing the burden of caring for older parents. Meloni, who has a daughter with her partner, told the family association congress that it was time to

reverse the trend. But she said it must be done without resorting to surrogacy, hitting on broader conservative political talking points that have surrounded the demographic debate as the government's crackdown on migrants and aversion to registering both parents of children of same-sex couples. "We want a nation where it is no longer scandalous to say that whatever the legitimate, free choices, inclinations of each person we are all born of a man or a woman," Meloni said to applause. "Where it is not taboo to say that motherhood is not for sale, that wombs are not for rent and children are not over-the-counter products that you can choose on the shelf as if you were in the supermarket and maybe return if then the product does not match what you expect." National statistics bureau ISTAT has been sounding the demographic alarm for years, given the number of live births in Italy has tanked steadily from 576,659 in 2008 to the 392,598 last year — the first year since Italy's unification that the number has fallen below 400,000. □

Ukrainian deminers get training in Cyprus from U.S., Irish experts

By **MENELAOS HADJICOSTIS**
Associated Press

NICOSIA, Cyprus (AP) — Cyprus is working together with Irish and U.S. military experts to help train two groups of Ukrainian personnel in clearing an untold

number of unmarked minefields in their homeland, the island nation's defense minister said Friday. Replying to an Associated Press query, Minister Michalis Georgallas said a first group of 24 Ukrainians was currently un-

dergoing training in Cypriot military installations, with another group expected to arrive next month.

The training was under the auspices of a European Union Military Assistance Mission (EUMAM Ukraine) that was launched last October to meet Ukraine's calls for support, he said.

As the situation on the ground in Ukraine now stands, a 5,000-strong team of demining experts would need at least 30 years to clear all mines from unmarked minefields across the front lines, Georgallas said. He said Cypriot officers are also taking part in training of Ukrainian personnel in Germany. Cyprus has much experience in demining as many thousands of the deadly munitions remain. The mines are

a vestige of defenses set up in the wake of the 1974 Turkish invasion triggered by a coup that aimed to unite Cyprus with Greece. The United Nations have for years assisted in demining efforts, particularly inside a buffer zone it controls that separates a breakaway, Turkish Cypriot north and an internationally recognized, Greek Cypriot south. Meanwhile, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Kyiv was delaying its long-awaited counteroffensive against Russia's occupying forces because it lacked enough Western weapons to succeed without taking too many casualties.

A Ukrainian counteroffensive against Russia's more than 14-month-old invasion has been expected since

warmer weather improved battlefield conditions. But Zelenskyy told European broadcasters in an interview aired Thursday that a counteroffensive now would result in too many casualties and that would be "unacceptable."

The Ukrainian president said more time was needed since "not everything has arrived yet" in terms of equipment.

Ukraine's troops are receiving Western training, as well as advanced weapons, as they gear up for an assault. Cyprus has said it won't transfer its Soviet-era tanks, armored personnel carriers and anti-aircraft missile batteries to Ukraine because it continues to face off against 35,000 Turkish troops deployed in the north. □



An interior ministry sapper defuses a mine on a minefield after recent battles in Irpin close to Kyiv, Ukraine, on April 19, 2022.

Associated Press

During the second day of the Caribbean Climate & Energy Conference (CCEC): It is important for small island to work together more often to resolve the challenges brought by climate change

(Oranjestad)—The second day of the CCEC conference on Thursday morning started with a speech from the Minister of Nature, Minister Ursell Arends. Aruba, along with the Netherlands organized the conference, where in different representatives, authorities and experts from the Dutch Caribbean islands and around the world met—either in person or virtually—to discuss on the field of energy and climate.

Minister Ursell Arends opened the conference with a warm welcome to those present. The theme he elaborated on was the impact of climate change and the urgency to attend to the consequences of this on the environment of Aruba. Minister Arends expressed that he acknowledges that the challenges are multidimensional, and that is why there is a need for a strategic plan to resolve this. As a minister, Ar-

ends is in charge with all issues concerning the Aruban nature and environment. He elaborated on the importance of cooperation and collaboration between countries, in order to promote sustainable developments. The minister urged everyone present to develop methods and strategies that take into account future generations and that respond to the necessity of nature.

Dutch minister of Climate and environment, Rob Jetten, expressed that countries are currently going under water. Collective action is cardinal to ensure the future of everyone on this planet. Furthermore, he elaborated on the different risks that the islands face. As a minister in charge of matters such as this, he acknowledges that there is much to be done to "make up" for what has not been done earlier.

The Netherlands itself is a country that resides below the water line, and it also feels the effects and risks of climate change. The country is currently actively working to reduce these damaging factors against the environment, namely by reducing the carbon footprint that the country produces and to promote and educate the community on the importance of sustainability and transition of energy. Finally, Minister Jetten expressed that the Dutch kingdom is committed to work together for a solution.

Mr. Selwin Charles Hart, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Climate Action and Just Transition, elaborated through a video call on the challenges that climate change, the transition of energy and the role that the UN plays in this initiative.

Mr. Simon Stiell, Executive



Secretary of the United Nations Climate Change Secretariat, elaborated on the topic of climate and energy, saying that this conference is making way for countries to better work together for the big challenge we are currently facing.

After the speeches, 3 sessions of work groups were assembled on the topics of Transition of Just Energy, Creating Resilient Climatic Ecosystems and Financing of Climate Action. In these sessions, the participants discussed how to achieve more cooperation be-

tween the small islands. And together with financial instances, look for ways to get the necessary funding to sustain the actions needed.

Being small islands, there is a sentiment in all who participated, that there is not enough union between the islands to combat this problematic subject. During the conference, it was expressed that without this union, there is no way to achieve the goals necessary for the benefit of the small islands. The first CCEC conference is the first step to achieve this. □

John Wesley High School to close its doors; students and teachers must be transferred

(Oranjestad)—The John Wesley High School in San Nicolas, which falls under the Protestant Christian Education Foundation Aruba (SPCOA), has been subject to discussions in the press in the past few days. Our reporter has posed different questions regarding this issue to the Minister of Education, Endy Croes, but has yet to receive answers.

During his last press conference on the matter, Minister Croes assured that after various discussions with SPCOA, they presented a table written in a letter, indicated the number of students that were attended the high school in the past few years: "In 2018 or 2019, the school only had 225 students, which was still permissible by law. Unfortunately, this year has only seen a total of 64 students," Croes stated.

For this, he explained that you cannot run a school with this tiny number of students. This would mean a loss in money, because the operation cannot be sustained for much longer. There is a possibility to raise the tuition from 700 Aruban florins to 1,000 florins, "but this is a decision that the

minister has no influence in. This is decided by management of the foundations under which John Wesley High School forms part of. However, they have provided a safety net for the students and teacher; they made sure that they could be transferred to other nearby high schools."

It was on April 19th that the students have sent a letter directed to Minister Croes concerning the possible closure of their school. In the letter, they pleaded to the minister to reconsider the closure before taking a final decision.

They expressed that their tiny school is a family. They have created a social media account for the school in order to gain more entries of students and consequently reduce the current expensive tuition.

"We are members of the student council SMAD, Students Making a Difference. We established this council this year to make sure that our voice is heard concerning our education. The reason we sent this letter is to share our point of view on why we think the school should remain operational. Our main concern is to lose the comfort we acquired while attending. The reason why we want to keep the school running is



because it is there for you no matter what. Teachers even stay after school, or use their free time to give extra lessons or to provide extra support for the students. We are upset that no one addressed this matter with us, or even asked us about our interest, our rights. We as SMAD heard the concerns of every student," the document read. □



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How it all began

It was 1938 when Mr. Eric Ponson started his journey at General Store. Ponson did not hesitate and decided to buy General Store. Buying a store and thus going from employee to owner of a business with a debt of 11.000 guilders was not an easy task.

As the saying goes: "Behind every successful man, is a strong

woman". In the case of Ponson, this was no different. As General Store progressed and slowly became successful, Mrs. Irene Ponson, came in to assist her husband. Irene Ponson is a visionary, she knew exactly where and how to invest and within a short amount of time in 1970, General Store moved to a better location at the Steenweg. This allowed for a lot more merchandise, products and employees. Supply and demand was as such, that General Store became the number 1 electrical business. Business kept going so well that the location at the Steenweg became too small and was moved later to Dakota Shopping Paradise and later to Pedro Gallego Straat. With this move, an expansion was decided upon and an electronics

store in Savaneta was opened. General Store still being very successful was ready for more growth.

Ricky, Kenneth, Corine and Frans are the fruits of this marriage. Kenneth and Frans however, decided to further develop their father's legacy and continued with their mother's dream to expand the business. An expansion not in square feet only, but in merchandise as well. A great opportunity presented itself when the Ponson family was able to buy a piece of property across from the airport. In 2007 the Ponson family moved into their brand new and huge building

After a successful opening and expansion, Kenneth and Frans who inherited their mother's vision, decided that General Store was ready for yet another expansion. With the support of Mr. Tom Barfell and management of Do it Best in the States, the construction of Do it Center commenced.

Fast forward to today. A Do it Center in Aruba, with more than 50.000 top of the line items for interior as well exterior use, building materials, STO products and a top of the line grocery store. Perseverance, responsibility, vision and the courage to invest have made Ponson's General Store as successful as it is today.

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Aruba Tourism Authority honored loyal visitors at Marriott's Ocean Club

The Aruba Tourism Authority recently had the great pleasure to recognize Emerald Ambassadors of Aruba. This wonderful couple were respectively honored with a certificate acknowledging their years of visits, loyalty, and love for the island of Aruba.

The honor certification is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation and to say "Masha Danki" to guests whom have visited Aruba 10, 20, or 35 years or more consecutively.

The three honoring levels are as follows:

Distinguished Visitor (10>years consecutively visiting Aruba)

Goodwill Ambassador (20>years consecutively visiting Aruba)

Emerald Ambassador (35>years consecutively visiting Aruba)

The honorees were:

Emerald Ambassadors of Aruba

Mr. Daniel & Mrs. Joan Agolia from New York, United States.

Ms. Kimberley Richardson representing the Aruba Tourism Authority, and staff members of the Marriott's Ocean Club bestowed the certificate to the honorees, presented them with memorable gifts, and also thanked them for choosing Aruba as their best-loved vacation destination and as their home-away-from-home.

On behalf of the Aruba Tourism Authority, we would like to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to Mr. & Mrs. Agolia for their continued visits to the "One Happy Island".

Top reasons for returning to Aruba provided by the Agolia's were:

Aruba's warm consistent weather all year round
Aruba's variety of restaurants to choose from
Aruba's picturesque sunsets
Aruba's nice sandy beaches
Aruba's hospitable people



**beauty
& THE
BEACH**

Aruba Today is delighted to share to its readers a new segment called "Beauty and the Beach", where we take a minute to honor our guests who have decided to spend their vacation on our beautiful and warm island.

In this edition, we'd like to give a shout out to **Ken and Margie Anderson from Boston**. This is their first time visiting the island. Aruba is always proud to host all families and guests. We at Aruba Today encourage any visitor of the island to send in their pictures and/or messages; who knows? You might get on the cover!

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Short history of the beginnings of baseball in Aruba

ORANJESTAD — Baseball was played on the island of Aruba in the 1930's, but only by United States expatriates working for LAGO and living inside the LAGO colony. Jim Bluejacket, the legendary US Indian who had played in two major league teams, worked for LAGO during 14 years and was a key factor in the growth of the popularity of the game in the colony. There is no record of Bluejacket ever playing outside the colony.

Outside the colony, the game of baseball was introduced to Aruba by Venezuelan immigrants and sailors on the Venezuelan fishing boats that used Aruba as their home port. They formed pick-up teams and played games on Sundays on an open field behind what is now the Court of Justice. One of the Venezuelans that comes to mind is Felix Garrido, grandfather of our current Prime-Minister.

In the late 30s the leader of this group was Raúl Aparicio, a cousin of Luis Aparicio who is now enshrined in the Hall of Fame in Cooperstown. The Aparicios were evidently very good at sports. Raúl had two brothers who also played baseball, René and Roman. Rosendo, his only brother who did not play baseball became a professional soccer player in the Venezuelan league. Rosendo was nicknamed "Cabeza de oro" (golden head) for a memorable header he scored to win a game for his team.

Interestingly, it was in Aruba that Luis Aparicio played his first game outside of Venezuela. This took place in 1950 when he played shortstop for the school he attended. Later he played for "Cabimas" in a double-header of the Venezuelan Western League. These official games of the league were authorized to be played in Aruba by the Professional Baseball Organization of Venezuela. Several others who played



in those games have also been enshrined.

Luis Aparicio's father was the super popular Luis "El Grande" (the great one) after whom the baseball stadium in Maracaibo is named. He and his brother owned the professional baseball teams "Gavilanes" which later became the "Aguilas", and the "Cabimas".

In the early '40s, another group, mostly immigrants from the Dominican Republic also became very active with pickup teams. Some of these remained active in baseball well into the early '50s; as umpires, managers even as players. Among these were Nestor "Pantin" Guerrero who also had a musical band. Perhaps not so coincidentally, many of Pantin's players were also musicians. Luthai Pantophlet who umpired many years was a well-known drummer. Gaston Hazel was a bongo player; José Bryson and the brothers Nicholson, Teddy and



Julio, all played several instruments.

In San Nicolas, baseball was played on the grounds next to where the LAGO Sport Park (now Laveist Sport Park) was officially inaugurated in March 1941.

During the WWII years, baseball got a big lift from the influx of Puerto Rican and US soldiers stationed here. As LAGO was playing a very important role in the struggle against Hitler, it was able to get all the sports equipment needed here to allow more people to participate.

In the '40s only the Lago Sports Park organized baseball championship games. The first teams to participate were Artraco, (Aruba Trading Co.), Esso Garage and Botica San Lucas. In 1945 Venezuelan employees of the Lago refinery participated under the name of "Cafenol", a very popular Venezuelan coffee brand. Two other groups of Venezuelan immigrants formed the teams "Cerveceria" (named after the iconic team Cerveceria Caracas), and "Venezuela", although not all members of these teams were Venezuelans. This was also the year that the team sponsored by Roxy Café started to play as "Dodgers". Dodgers became the dominant baseball powerhouse till the 1950s.

Other teams that entered the baseball scene in the

late 1940s: Pepsi Cola (Oranjestad) and St. Thomas Boys (former students of St. Thomas College, Oranjestad). "Baby Ruth" in San Nicolas played initially under the name "Camel" and "Barnes' Ramblers" the only team consisting of Lago Colony players to participate in the Lago Sport Park championships. "Red Rock Cola" was formed in Oranjestad in 1950. In 1952 the team Pepsi Cola became "Nesbitt's" and had players of seven countries, including two American expats from Lago Colony.

In 1950 a group of prominent members of the Aruba community founded the Amateur Baseball Bond of Aruba (ABBA) to give structure to the management of the sport and became the organizers of official championship games. While maintaining the existing teams in a league that was referred to as A-class, ABBA established a B-class league in which the "Budweiser" and "Braves" played the first years.

By 1952 Aruba became a member of the International Amateur Baseball Association and fielded a team managed by Joe Proterra, (former pitcher of "Barnes' Ramblers"), that would play for the first time ever in the Amateur Baseball World Series that took place in Havana, Cuba in September. Surprisingly, Aruba won two of its six games and

became the darling of the Havana fans. Nell Harms of the Aruban team was named the "Outstanding player of the week" for his performance against Honduras. He allowed just two hits, struck out 15 and hit the only homerun of the game. Joe Cambria, the famous scout for the Washington Senators offered him a contract, but Nel was not interested, but the next year, at the Amateur Baseball World Series in Caracas, Venezuela, Nel and Ruben Phillips did sign and in 1954 they played professional baseball the Georgia-Florida League and the Texas-New Mexico League. They were the first Arubans to play professionally, but not the only ones.

During the games in Havana, contacts were made with the organizers of Little League Baseball in Cuba which eventually resulted in the introduction of Little League in Aruba. Little League of Aruba has been extremely successful: It has produced many players who earned baseball scholarships at universities in the United States, a few who played professionally in the Netherlands and different countries in the Caribbean and five who reached the major leagues: Calvin Maduro, Eugene Kingsale, Radhames Dijkhoff, Sydney Ponson, and Xander Bogaerts one of the brightest stars of Boston Red Sox.

Written by Mr. Clyde Harms

Artist Erika Moran;

“My message is to carry the greatness that we all have inside, and that greatness implies art”

Oranjestad - Erika Moran, an artist of plastic art that has gone through many phases in her life, sat down in an interview and told the story of life taught her what she had inside of her and what this can bring to others.

During the interview, Moran went back in time and talked about how she came to Aruba from Barranquilla, Colombia 14 years ago following love, and that led to her exploring the culture of Aruba. She would read the national anthem, learn the language and meet locals, all which in her thoughts were for a reason. “I connected with the tranquility of the island, with harmony, the beach for me is my therapy and through an immense search, I discovered that I had a lot of time without painting and I fell into a great sadness,” said Moran.

Depression is a word that she felt and lived personally. She feels the need to speak about this topic because she knows that “there are a lot of people out there at this moment, in all parts of the world, that fall into a great sadness. I discovered that this is a way that my soul would speak to me and tell me to bring out everything that I

really am.”

In this search, everyone looks for what they can give to others and what the things we receive can give us, “but that is not what truly fills you,” Erika expressed. Moran discovered that she was looking on the outside for something that was already within her. “What I found was that I am an artist and through that I started to explore the nature of Aruba. I connected with its colors and through my artwork I wanted to transmit this to others.”

Through colors and the psychology of each one of them, she started to use her brushes to illustrate the fauna, flora and beaches to transmit an emotional state for people to be able to connect through her artwork with their emotional state. “Psychology through color can transmit calm, stress or a state of internal searching that represents the road of your sub consciousness and the road can be represented through the colors purple, blue, red, until you reach the color yellow that represents illumination. That is the message, to carry the greatness that everyone has inside. And that greatness implies art.”



Moran expressed that in her opinion, everyone has art and everyone is an artist. The only way each person can channel that is through art and that state of creativity includes different emotions like happiness, sadness, euphoria, that in turn the artist can relate to as well as every other person that has these emotions in them. “That was my journey to accept myself after many tries to be someone else, another version of myself. Now I am an artist and I teach others that we all have this capacity in us.”

The essence of coming to his world is to learn, and just as Moran emphasizes, teaching others how to learn is part of it. “We need to teach that although the road is hard, we have to connect with each other so we can be a lighthouse for each other. Imagine if we all could realize this? We can achieve a different world. We have to help each other and that way we can create a marvelous chain that will take time, but is worth it all.”

She also informed that she promotes events for our visitors to also learn art, tell their history of Aruba, talk about the touristic places and paints them as well. With this, people can connect with culture, art and gets a different experience of entertainment. □



CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS 43 Knitting

1 Suit piece need

5 Not nude 44 Stereo

9 May, precursor
for one

10 Romantic one

12 Pond cover

13 Humble

14 African city

16 Gratuity

17 Coffee dispenser

18 African city

20 Annoys

22 Preten-
tious

23 Egypt's
Sadat

25 Racket

28 Put in a
mauso-
leum

32 African
city

34 Aussie
hopper

35 Suffix
for hero

36 African
city

38 Raft
pilot

40 Fads

41 Veep
Agnew

42 Extreme
pain

DOWN

1 Hit song
of 1958

2 Train

3 Teacher's
reward

4 1976

horror
movie

5 Assertion

6 High hit

7 Online
icon

8 Stop

9 "Stop
being a
wimp!"



Yesterday's answer

11 Settle, as
a debt

15 Johnson
biographer

19 Homer's
son

21 Siren

24 Servant
for tav-
erns, e.g.

25 Passes
over

26 Bed
topper

27 Aviator
Earhart

29 Salem's
state

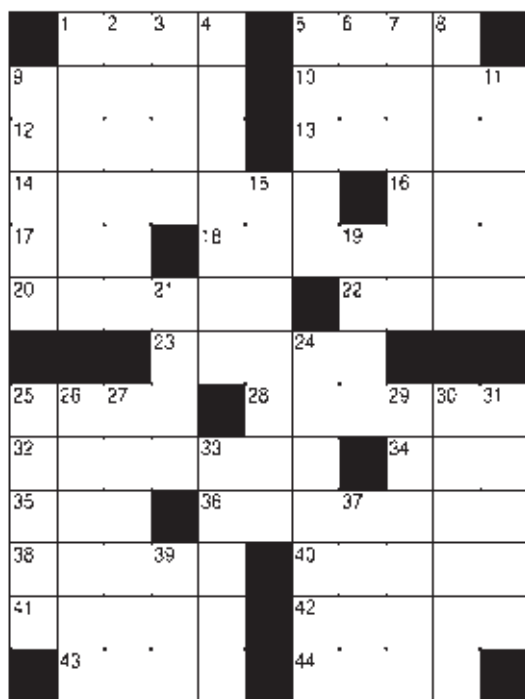
30 Enter-
tainer

31 Over-
bearing

33 Composer
Copland

37 Othello's
betrayer

39 Screw up



AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's. X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

5-13

CRYPTOQUOTE

OFY HLN SQN CSFLOSNNKKNL FB

OFYL FVP KWBN. HPT OFY XHP

XLNHSN OFYL FVP KNJNPT.

FL PFS. — WCHINK HKKNPTN

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: RAINY DAYS SHOULD BE SPENT AT HOME WITH A CUP OF TEA AND A GOOD BOOK. — BILL WATTERSON

Twitter's new CEO is an NBCUniversal executive with deep ad industry ties

By WYATTE GRANTHAM-PHILIPS and BARBARA ORTUTAY

AP Technology Writers

Elon Musk confirmed that the new CEO for Twitter will be NBCUniversal's Linda Yaccarino, an executive with deep ties to the advertising industry.

"I am excited to welcome Linda Yaccarino as the new CEO of Twitter!" Musk wrote in a Friday tweet. He added that Yaccarino "will focus primarily on business operations" while Musk will stay closely connected to product design and new technology.

Before that announcement, NBCUniversal said Friday that Yaccarino would step down immediately as chairwoman for global advertising and partnerships. Musk, who bought Twitter last fall and has been running it since, has long insisted that he would step down as top executive at the company, which is now called X Corp.

Few expect Musk to remove himself from the decision making process at Twitter, however.

"While he's stepping back from the CEO title, Musk is far from likely to step back from calling the product shots," said Mike Proulx, research director at Forrester Research. Yaccarino, with deep roots in the advertising industry, could be a linchpin in Twitter's future.

Luring advertisers is critical for Musk and Twitter after many fled in the early months after his takeover of the social media platform, fearing harm to their brands in the ensuing chaos. Musk said in late April that advertisers had returned, but provided no



Twitter CEO Elon Musk, center, speaks with Linda Yaccarino, chairman of global advertising and partnerships for NBC, at the POSSIBLE marketing conference, Tuesday, April 18, 2023, in Miami Beach, Fla.

Associated Press

details. Mark DiMassimo, founder and creative chief of ad agency DiGo, said Yaccarino successfully integrated and digitized ad sales at Comcast and NBC and that her track record of cross-selling ads across different platforms could appeal to Musk as he tries to transform Twitter from a social media company to a bigger media platform. Yaccarino worked at NBCUniversal for nearly 12 years with her team generating more than \$100 billion in ad sales since 2011, her company bio notes. According to LinkedIn, Yaccarino previously served as NBC's chair for advertising and client partnerships and as president of cable entertainment and digital advertising sales. Prior to her time with NBC, Yaccarino worked at global entertainment company Turner for almost two decades.

Last month, Yaccarino interviewed Musk on a Miami stage last month in front of hundreds of advertisers.

"If anyone can translate

the Musk vision into advantages for marketers she'll be able to do it," DiMassimo said Friday, prior to Musk's confirmation. "Even though there's skepticism and all marketers live in the 'show me' state right now with regard to Twitter, if in fact she does go to Twitter this is a powerfully reassuring move." Proulx added that advertising is not the only challenge that Twitter's new CEO will face — after all, Musk has "fundamentally altered" Twitter both as a product and a community, arguably "for the worse." Musk's tenure at Twitter's helm has been chaotic.

He began his first day firing the company's top executives, followed by roughly 80% of its staff, which has meant that Twitter has far fewer engineers to ensure that the site is running smoothly and far fewer content moderators to help rid it of hate speech, animal cruelty and graphic violence. He's upended the platform's verification system and has scaled back safeguards against the spread of misinformation. It's been some of these changes along with Musk's own penchant for spreading misinformation and engaging with prominent conspiracy theorists and far-right figures that analysts say soured many advertisers on the platform. □

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24/7

See what baby names were the most popular last year

By The Associated Press
WASHINGTON (AP) — Dutton and Wrenlee are on the rise but they're no match for champs Liam and Olivia as the top baby names in the U.S. last year. The Social Security Administration released the annual list Friday. The agency tracks baby names in each state based on applications for Social Security cards, with names dating to 1880. It's Liam's sixth straight year as No. 1. Olivia has reigned since the name unseated Emma four years ago. Emma is No. 2. Coming in third for girls' names is Charlotte, followed by Amelia, Sophia, Isabella, Ava, Mia, Evelyn and Luna. For boys' names, Liam is followed by Noah, Oliver, James, Elijah, William, Henry, Lucas, Benjamin and Theodore. Luna is the only newcomer in the Top 10, booting Harper.

The agency has been compiling the list since 1997, often revealing the impact pop culture has on baby naming trends. The smash hit "Yellowstone" has clearly influenced new parents. The neo-Western starring Kevin Costner debuted in 2018, with characters surfacing among baby names ever since. Dutton moved up the Social Security list to 835, a change of 986 spots from 2021. It's the last name of the fictional family featured on the series, and it counts Costner's John Dutton in its ranks. Dutton is the fastest rising name in the Social Security rankings. Another Dutton name follows actual Dutton as a star with a bullet among baby names. Kayce, as in Kayce John Dutton on the show, moved to the 587th most popular name, up from 1,077 the year before. Luke Grimes plays Kayce. Rip, also from "Yellowstone," has grabbed some naming attention, but it didn't crack Social Security's top 1,000. Cole Hauser's Rip Wheeler is Dutton adjacent as the son-in-law of John. Other names rising fast for boys: Chosen, Khaza, Eithan. For girls, Wrenlee is followed by Neriah, Arlet, Georgina and Amiri. The Social Security Administration's latest data shows 3.64 million babies in the U.S. were issued Social Security cards last year, up slightly from 2021. □



The toes of a baby are seen DHR Health, July 29, 2020, in McAllen, Texas.

Associated Press

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Craven, Busch recall 2003 Darlington thriller that stands test of time

By PETE IACOBELLI

AP Sports Writer

DARLINGTON, S.C. (AP) —

Ricky Craven wasn't sure what to expect at the Darlington Raceway starting line more than 20 years ago. By the end, he had his final NASCAR Cup Series victory, a lifelong friend in racing rival Kurt Busch and a place in the sport's history. Darlington will celebrate NASCAR's 75th anniversary at the Goodyear 400 on Sunday during the series' annual throwback weekend. The track "Too Tough To Tame" will also remember the edge-of-your-seat race from 2003 when Craven finished 0.002 seconds ahead of Busch in what remains the closest finish in NASCAR history.

"It was a while after I hung up my helmet until I realized the impact that race had on my life," Craven recalled this week. "No matter where I go people associate me with that moment, that race."

And for good reason.

Craven and future NASCAR champ Busch were one-two at Darlington on March 16, 2003, for the final few laps. Craven briefly swept in front of Busch with



Kurt Busch, right, and Ricky Craven (32) collide after the finish line during the NASCAR Carolina Dodge Dealers 400 auto race, Sunday, March 16, 2003, at Darlington Raceway in Darlington, S.C.
 Associated Press

two laps left, but the Roush Racing driver crossed over to regain the lead.

Craven made a final move for the front, going low out of the final turn when the cars locked against each other and went across the line with fans, crews and both competitors wondering who earned the checkered flag. Busch had a bad feeling he'd come up short. "When we locked, I

looked through his window net and I looked at my window net," Busch said, "and thought, 'Oh, man, he's ahead of mine.'"

The cars uncoupled on the way to turns one and two before finally coming to a stop after the frenetic finish with spectators throughout the venue on their feet.

Timing confirmed Craven's razor-thin win by 0.002 seconds, matched only by Jim-

mie Johnson's victory over Clint Bowyer at Talladega in 2011.

"Did you ever?" FOX broadcaster Mike Joy said to the TV audience when it ended. "No, I never," analyst and NASCAR Hall of Famer Darrell Waltrip responded. Craven couldn't get any messages over his headset and when he finally stopped his car, looked up at the scoring tower "and

saw No. 32 at No. 1," he said, chuckling. "That was my confirmation."

Tyler Reddick was 7 years old and remembers watching the Craven-Busch finish. "As soon as my parents were OK with me watching racing and other sports on TV, it was NASCAR on Sundays," he said and knowing he'd seen something special.

"It's one of the most iconic finishes that we have," said Reddick, whose throwback Sunday is Busch's No. 97 Sharpie car.

Craven was thrilled about his second and what turned out to be his final Cup Series win, but wasn't sure if a dust-up with Busch, a quick-tempered youngster, was ahead,

Someone tapped Craven on the shoulder in victory lane and told him Busch was on his way. "He's not going to be happy," Craven remembered thinking. When Busch arrived, he immediately stuck out his hand, hugged Craven and told him "that was incredible."

The two became instant admirers and often celebrate their shared moment of NASCAR history. □

Giro leaders play it safe on first mountain stage

CAMPO IMPERATORE, Italy

(AP) — The first mountain stage of the Giro d'Italia ended without any changes to the top of the overall standings on Friday.

The leaders all crossed together amid big banks of snow, three minutes behind a group of three breakaway riders.

Norwegian rider Andreas Leknessund therefore held on to the pink jersey, while pre-race favorites Remco Evenepoel and Primož Roglič remained second and fifth overall, respectively.

Italian rider Davide Bais won the seventh stage when he attacked the other two breakaway rid-

ers with 150 meters to go. It was the first professional victory for Bais, who rides for the Eolo-Kometa team founded by former Giro champions Alberto Contador and Ivan Basso.

"It was unexpected because I went into the breakaway to prepare for an attack by Lorenzo Fortunato," Bais said. "He was the inspiration for our team to go for a mountain stage victory since he made it at Monte Zoncolan two years ago. In the finale, I knew I was the fastest so I waited for my opportunity to make the last push."

Karel Vacek crossed second, nine seconds behind,

and Simone Petilli came third, 16 seconds behind.

The 218-kilometer (135-mile) route from Capua ended with what appeared to be a daunting top-category climb on the Gran Sasso d'Italia to Campo Imperatore in the central region of Abruzzo.

But the main pack rode at a slow pace virtually the entire way.

The main pack finished 3:10 behind Bais, with Evenepoel crossing fourth in the stage and Roglič fifth after a brief sprint.

Evenepoel remained 28 seconds behind Leknessund, with Roglič 1:12 back in fifth.



Italy's Davide Bais celebrates winning the 7th stage of the Giro D'Italia, Tour of Italy cycling race, from Capua to Gran Sasso, Friday, May 12, 2023.
 Associated Press

"It was hard to climb up here," Leknessund said. "But we controlled the situation. I was expecting some attacks that never happened because there was a headwind."

Stage 8 on Saturday is an

undulating 207-kilometer (129-mile) leg from Terni to Fossombrone featuring a few minor climbs.

Then there's an individual time trial on Sunday.

The race ends in Rome on May 28. □

NFL season kicks off with Super Bowl champion Chiefs hosting Lions; Jets' Rodgers on MNF

By **ROB MAADDI**
AP Pro Football Writer

Patrick Mahomes and the Super Bowl champion Kansas City Chiefs will kick off the NFL season against the upstart Detroit Lions in a matchup of high-powered offenses and will host Jalen Hurts and the Philadelphia Eagles in a Super Bowl rematch on "Monday Night Football" in Week 11.

Aaron Rodgers will make his New York Jets debut in the first Monday night game of the season against the Buffalo Bills and later faces the Miami Dolphins in the NFL's first Black Friday game on Nov. 24.

Thanks to Rodgers' arrival in the Big Apple, the Jets will have six nationally televised games, including their first Sunday night game since 2011 when they take on the Chiefs on Oct. 1. That'll be the first ever Mahomes-Rodgers matchup.

"It's not going to be monotonous with all the 1 o'clock games we're used to," Jets coach Robert Saleh said on NFL Network.

Coming off their second championship in four seasons, the Chiefs will host the Lions on Sept. 7 on "Thursday Night Football." The Lions finished 9-8 last sea-



Kansas City Chiefs quarterback Patrick Mahomes (15) waves after the Chiefs defeated the Denver Broncos in an NFL football game Saturday, Jan. 8, 2022, in Denver.

Associated Press

son after a 1-6 start and knocked Rodgers and the Green Bay Packers out of the playoffs with a 20-16 victory at Lambeau Field in the final regular-season game. Mahomes, the two-time NFL MVP, led the Chiefs to a 38-35 comeback win over the Eagles in the Super Bowl. The teams will battle at Arrowhead Stadium on Nov. 20.

Fans will get their first look at Rodgers in his new green-

and-white No. 8 Jets jersey when New York hosts Josh Allen and the Bills in an AFC East matchup on Sept. 11. The NFL released the full schedule for its 104th season on Thursday night after revealing five international games and several others earlier in the day and Wednesday.

Other highlights include a rematch of the NFC championship game in Week 13 and a rematch of the AFC

title game in Week 17. Hurts and the Eagles will host the San Francisco 49ers on Dec. 3. The Chiefs will host Joe Burrow and the Cincinnati Bengals on New Year's Eve. The Eagles knocked quarterback Brock Purdy out of the conference title game on their way to a dominant 31-7 win. Purdy had elbow surgery in the offseason, but should be ready by the time the teams meet again. The Thanksgiving

tripleheader features three division games. It begins with Jordan Love and the Green Bay Packers visiting the Lions. The Dallas Cowboys then host the Washington Commanders and the Seattle Seahawks host the 49ers in prime time.

Mahomes and the Chiefs will host AFC West rival Las Vegas in the early game of the Christmas Day tripleheader. The Eagles will host the New York Giants in one of 14 playoff rematches on the 2023 schedule. Lamar Jackson and the Ravens wrap up Christmas action in San Francisco.

The New England Patriots also announced seven-time Super Bowl champion Tom Brady will be honored at the team's home opener against the Eagles on Sept. 10. Brady, who led the Patriots to six Super Bowl titles, retired in February after spending the last three seasons with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers.

On Wednesday, the NFL announced that Trevor Lawrence and the Jacksonville Jaguars will become the first NFL team to play two international games in the same season when they spend back-to-back weeks in London. □

Kentucky Derby winner Mage will run in the Preakness

By **GARY B. GRAVES**
AP Sports Writer

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP) — Kentucky Derby winner Mage will run in the 148th Preakness following an encouraging workout at Churchill Downs, its co-owner said. Mage galloped about 1 1/2 miles at a brisk pace with exercise rider J.J. Delgado aboard on a cloudy but mild Friday morning at the track. Co-owner and bloodstock agent Ramiro Restrepo said the chestnut colt was "thriving" with good energy levels after his latest training session

since winning the 149th Derby, paving the way for the horse to enter the Triple Crown's second jewel at Pimlico in Baltimore.

"He's had a magnificent week of training," Restrepo said with co-owner Chase Chamberlin, co-founder and racing director of partner CMNWLTH. "(Trainer) Gustavo Delgado (Jr.) was just really pleased and over the moon of how he's come back. He's shown all the positive signs. So, it's on to Baltimore and crab cakes, here we come."

Mage is coming off a one-

length victory over Two Phil's in the Derby at 15-1 odds after charging into contention entering the stretch. The son of Good Magic and Puca by 2008 Derby and Preakness winner Big Brown earned a signature win after running second and fourth in the Florida Derby and Fountain of Youth, respectively. He didn't run as a 2-year-old but won his debut at Gulfstream by nearly four lengths. Mage will run in the 1 3/16th mile Preakness on May 20, just two weeks after covering 1 1/4 miles in



Javier Castellano, atop Mage, reacts in the winner's circle after winning the 149th running of the Kentucky Derby horse race at Churchill Downs Saturday, May 6, 2023, in Louisville, Ky.

Associated Press

the Derby in 2:01.57. Restrepo said the horse has done everything he did before the Derby, with his recovery being monitored after

his longest trip. He will train again on Saturday morning before being driven to Baltimore with another workout planned on Monday. □

Weekly SPECIALS

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| <div><div>WAS \$9.18</div><div></div><div>Per KG</div><div>\$6.85</div><div>U.S. Porkloin Butterfly</div></div> | <div><div>WAS \$2.79</div><div></div><div>Each</div><div>\$2.11</div><div>Cucumber</div></div> | <div><div>WAS \$10.39</div><div></div><div>Per KG</div><div>\$7.99</div><div>Chicken Cuts</div></div> | <div><div>WAS \$7.71</div><div></div><div>Each</div><div>\$6.45</div><div>Califia Almond Milk Assorted 48oz</div></div> | |
| <div><div>WAS \$1.71</div><div></div><div>Each</div><div>\$1.02</div><div>Grapefruit Red</div></div> | <div><div>WAS \$12.57</div><div></div><div>Per KG</div><div>\$10.85</div><div>Brisket/Pecho</div></div> | <div><div>WAS \$8.54</div><div></div><div>Per Bag</div><div>\$7.77</div><div>Halos Clementines 3lb</div></div> | <div><div>WAS \$4.73</div><div></div><div>Each</div><div>\$3.99</div><div>Hak Chili con Carne 700gr</div></div> | <div><div>WAS \$1.37</div><div></div><div>Each</div><div>\$1.14</div><div>Maggi Sauce Aroma 200gr</div></div> |
| <div><div>WAS \$1.77</div><div></div><div>Each</div><div>\$1.54</div><div>Goodburry Semi-Skimmed Milk UHT 1L</div></div> | <div><div>WAS \$2.54</div><div></div><div>Each</div><div>\$2.28</div><div>Unox Stevige Goulash Soep 300ml</div></div> | <div><div>WAS \$7.50</div><div></div><div>Per Bag</div><div>\$6.28</div><div>Lays Fun Mix 15x</div></div> | <div><div>WAS \$2.85</div><div></div><div>Each</div><div>\$2.57</div><div>Goodburry Honey 400gr</div></div> | <div><div>WAS \$4.85</div><div></div><div>Each</div><div>\$4.28</div><div>Hawaiian Punch Fruit Juicy Red 128oz</div></div> |
| <div><div>WAS \$6.85</div><div></div><div>Each</div><div>\$5.14</div><div>GTS Kombucha Golden Pineapple 16fz</div></div> <div><div>WAS \$8.22</div><div></div><div>Each</div><div>\$7.37</div><div>Alexia Waffle Fries 20oz</div></div> | <div><div>WAS \$13.10</div><div></div><div>Each</div><div>\$11.42</div><div>Summer Eve Cleansing Wash Spa Lux Wash 12</div></div> <div><div>WAS \$7.77</div><div></div><div>Each</div><div>\$6.85</div><div>Fiora Double Rolls 2-Ply Sheet 12pk Green</div></div> | <div><div>WAS \$1.48</div><div></div><div>100 GR</div><div>\$1.14</div><div>Muenster Cheese</div></div> <div><div>WAS \$1.99</div><div></div><div>100 GR</div><div>\$1.65</div><div>Cotto Salami</div></div> | | |

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